

Secretary Johnson, thank you coming before the Committee today to testify. For over a decade and from my time as a state legislator in Minnesota, I have worked on the issue of what to do with our nation's nuclear waste. Minnesota ratepayers have already contributed \$714 million to the Nuclear Waste Fund to find a permanent solution to this problem, and yet the U.S. government still does not have an answer on how to store the nation's radioactive waste. I am deeply frustrated by this. Until the Administration can detail a real plan and commitment to resolving the issue of nuclear waste, it is irresponsible to abandon the study of Yucca Mountain as a viable option, particularly after \$100 billion has already been spent on the project.

- If Yucca Mountain is not seen as a viable storage facility, how long will it take before we finally find and have a permanent and safe storage site?
- How much more will it cost to have to find a new storage site?

The Administration and many of my colleagues have pushed for nuclear power plant expansion. We should not even be discussing the future of nuclear power until we can start cleaning up our toxic past.

- Why is the Administration promoting the construction and operation of new nuclear plants, which will simply generate more toxic waste, when we have not yet solved the waste problem from existing plants?

We have heard a lot about the consequences Yucca Mountain holds for Nevadans. Yet let me tell you the serious consequences for Minnesota.

About 30 miles from my district in St. Paul lies the Prairie Island Indian Community on the banks of the Mississippi River. The children of Prairie Island for over two decades have seen concrete casks of nuclear waste from their swing sets on a storage site owned by Xcel Energy that was designed to be only a temporary storage facility. This is an unacceptable human health and environmental hazard for this community and many others like it across America.

- Is it justified to continue collecting \$770 million dollars from the nation's ratepayers, when they are getting nothing in return for their investment?
- Will any funding be established or redirected to host communities like Prairie Island who must now bear the costs and adverse impacts associated with the not-so-temporary storage sites?